

BULLYING: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!!!

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Decades of research has shown us that bullying is like other forms of harassment:

It is the result of an imbalance of power- the student who bullies may be bigger, stronger, more popular or may have the support of peers who encourage harassing behavior.

The bully chooses the bullying behavior- the target does nothing to cause the bullying behavior.

The bully blames the target for the harassment-for example: " I only call him names because he is such a geek."

WARNING SIGNS OF CHILDREN WHO BULLY:

- Enjoys feeling powerful and in control
- May be popular with other students who envy his/her power
- Physically larger or stronger than peers
- Impulsive
- Loves to win at everything, both a poor winner and poor loser
- Seems to derive satisfaction from others' fear, discomfort, or pain
- Overly concerned with "respect", equates respect with fear.
- Gets excited when conflicts arise between others
- Blames others for his/her problems
- Disregards rules, defiant or oppositional towards adults
- Seeks attention, negative attention is just as good as positive attention
- May have problems at school and home
- Lacks coping skills

Stopping bullying, like stopping other forms of abuse, takes more than just giving targets advice. Saying things like, 'Don't let it bother you' or "tell them how you feel" or "wear different clothes so you won't get teased" borders on blaming the targets for the abuse. Dr. Dan Olweus, founder of the OLWEUS Bullying Prevention Program, the most researched based program available today focuses on changing the culture of a school, rather than attempting to change the behavior of the targets. **"Changing patterns of harassment takes a comprehensive approach, including setting clear standards for acceptable and unacceptable behavior, implementing consistent consequences for actions that are likely to hurt others, and providing education about bullying to every student."**

THE FOLLOWING INCLUDES WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW WHO ARE BULLIED:

It's not your fault: Targets of bullying need to know that the bully is fully responsible for the harassment and that nothing the target did caused it. Even if the target is different in some way, like being overly sensitive to teasing or having a disability, the bully still made the choice to threaten, tease or get physical. The bully is the person who did something wrong.

Bullying does hurt: Acknowledging the pain of bullying helps targets heal.

Ask for help from adults when you are bullied-and if you talk to an adult who does not help, keep telling adults until someone does help you: In recent years, we have seen tragic consequences of young people feeling angry and helpless. Young people need to know that we take their reports of bullying seriously and that we will take action to protect them from further harassment

BULLYING AFFECTS BYSTANDERS:

Fear to associate with the victim...because of possible retribution from the bully

Fear of lowering of their own status...or becoming victims themselves

Fear of reporting bullying incidents...because they do not want to be called a “snitch”, a “tattler”, or “informer”.

Feelings of guilt and helplessness...for not standing up to the bully on behalf of their classmates.

Fear of being drawn into bullying behavior...by group pressure.

BYSTANDERS MAY ADOPT THE BULLYING BEHAVIOR THEMSELVES:

Bystanders may feel by associating or identifying with the bully, they feel a sense of power and safety.

Bystanders may adopt a hostile world view and come to believe that bullying works.

Bystanders may believe they could not endure bullying, and so react violently to perceived acts of violence and become anticipatory aggressors.

REFUSAL OPTIONS FOR BYSTANDERS:

Refusing by NOT watching...walking away

Refusing by using humor...to diffuse the situation

Refusing by offering verbal support...to the student targeted

Naming the behavior... as bullying

Reporting...to an adult

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD BULLIES OTHERS:

- **Take it seriously, talk with your child, help change the behavior, talk with your child's teacher, work with the school, avoid physical discipline, talk about how bullying affects the victim, practice positive ways to handle anger, frustration, and disappointment, praise your child's efforts to change.**
- **DO NOT....blame the victim, ignore the problem, protect your child from consequences.**

KEEPING KIDS BULLY FREE: TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- Stand up straight, look the bully in the eye, and say in a firm, confident voice, “ Leave me alone!” or “Stop that! I don't like that!”
- Tell a joke or say something silly. (Don't make fun of the bully.)
- Stay calm and walk away. If possible, walk toward a crowded place or a group of your friends.
- If you feel you're in real danger, run away as fast as you can.
- Tell an adult
- Ask your child's teacher or the school counselor for more suggestions. Also, ask your child for suggestions. It's great if your child comes up with an idea, tries it, and it works!

Stan Davis, bullying prevention consultant, founder of www.stopbullyingnow.com, and author of Schools Where Everyone Belongs: Practical Strategies for Reducing Bullying.

Trudy Ludwig, bullying prevention consultant, author of Just Kidding, Tricycle Press, Berkeley

The Bully Free Classroom, Over 100 Tips and Strategies for Teachers K-8, Allan L. Beane, Ph.D. 1999, Free Spirit Publishing Inc.